

Poa laxiflora Buckley
loose-flowered bluegrass
Poaceae (Grass Family)

Status: StateThreatened

Rank: G3S1S2

General Description: Perennial with strong creeping rhizomes, bearing flowers and fruits in spikelets, $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (4 to 7 mm) long, the aerial stalks not clustered, erect, 36 to 47 in. (90 to 120 cm) tall; culms and generally also the sheaths and blades retrorsely scabrous; ligules $\frac{1}{32}$ to $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (1 to 2 mm); lemmas webbed at the base and covered with short soft hairs at the keel and at the marginal nerves, the intermediate nerves obscure; sheaths glabrous, closed to about mid length, often hooded below collar, usually scabrous on keel below collar, often scabrous on lateral nerves; blades mostly cauline, flat, usually prominently nerved, minutely scabrous on both surfaces, 4 to 6 in. (10 to 15 cm) long and 1 to 2 in. (3 to 5 cm) wide; anthers scarcely $\frac{1}{32}$ in. (1 mm).

Identification Tips: The culms of *P. laxiflora* are scabrous and the marginal nerves are pubescent, while the culms and marginal nerves of *P. leptocoma* are hairless. Additionally, *P. laxiflora* is usually considerably greater in size than *P. leptocoma*, all though larger specimens of the latter do occur. A technical key is required for identification.

Phenology: Flowering occurs from late May through June.

Range: Alaska and south to the Olympic Peninsula and southwest Washington; also in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Benton counties, Oregon.

Habitat: Moist woods to rocky open slopes, from near sea level to lower elevations in the mountains. Primarily a lowland species of wooded areas, *P. laxiflora* occurs mainly in moist, shaded habitats along the upper margins of sea beaches and in open meadows along river banks (Murray, 1980). Associated species include red alder (*Alnus rubra*), cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*), buttercup (*Ranunculus uncinatus*) sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) and various grasses (*Festuca subulata*, *Melica subulata*, and *Pleuropogon refractus*).

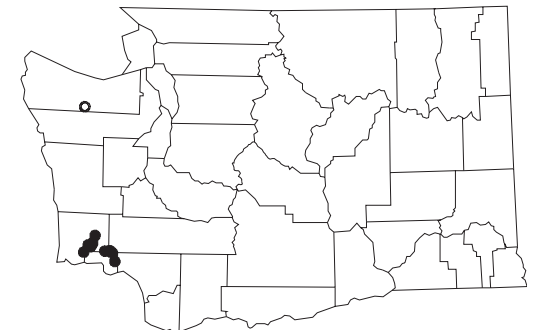
Ecology: The species may be dependent on processes that maintain a functioning hydrologic regime.

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Known distribution
of *Poa laxiflora*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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State Status Comments: The small number of reported populations and the limited range of *P. laxiflora* are responsible for the threatened status of the taxon in Washington.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory of this species is needed, particularly with the intent of locating additional populations in areas with appropriate habitat.

Threats: Because *P. laxiflora* often grows in close proximity to riparian areas, timber harvest poses a significant threat to nearby populations. The breakup of logjams resulting from timber harvesting has the potential to cause inundation of upstream habitat of *P. laxiflora*. Timber harvest could also increase spring runoff resulting in erosion of hillsides above populations of *P. laxiflora*, causing bank scouring and subsequent habitat loss.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L. and A. Cronquist. 1973. *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 730 pp.

Murray, D.F., A.R. Batten and J.C. Dawe. 1979. Threatened and endangered plants in selected areas of the BLM Fourtymile Planning Unit of Alaska. Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Anchorage, AK.